

strengths, the ability to unite in times of crises. A major element of that unity is recognizing and embracing our diversity. This month we do so by showing our respect and appreciation for the rich cultural heritage Hispanic Americans bring to our Nation.

Recent census figures show that there are more than 35 million Hispanic Americans in this country. Their ranks have increased 58 percent through the last decade. Hispanic Americans will soon be the largest minority group in the United States, making up 24 percent of the population by 2050. In my State of Maryland, the number of Hispanics grew more than 82 percent since 1990, making up more than 4 percent of the population statewide. I know that Hispanic Americans will continue to bring great contributions to Maryland's culture and economy.

Like America, the Hispanic culture within our country is diverse. Whether we look to the large Puerto Rican community in New York, the influx of Central Americans to the Washington Metropolitan region, Mexican Americans who have a long history in California, or Cuban Americans who have made South Florida their home, Hispanic American culture reflects the breadth and depth of the cultures of their nations of origin. Hispanic Americans are changing the face of America, challenging our tendency to view the world in terms of black and white and teaching us to accept ethnic diversity as well as racial differences.

I strongly believe that we will live up to the ideals of our Nation's founding only when all Americans have equal access to the building blocks of a strong society, education, employment, health care, housing and political participation. We must make sure that basic services and opportunities are available to Hispanic Americans. And, as this segment of the population grows, it will be increasingly important for educators, hospitals, civil services, and financial institutions to be able to communicate effectively, provide bilingual materials where appropriate, and be aware of cultural differences when delivering services. Hispanic Americans deserve to take full part in their communities and language barriers should not prevent them from doing so.

Throughout our history, different groups have come to this country contributing their culture, values and strengths to make the United States the strong diverse country that it is. The story of immigrants searching for a better life is a story that has been replayed countless times throughout our history, sustaining the growth of America since her beginning. Hispanic Americans continue this tradition and I am proud to have the opportunity to recognize their heritage this month.●

#### IN RECOGNITION OF DR. HENRY WALL

● Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the service of Dr. Henry Wall to New Mexican veterans. Dr. Wall recently retired from the Artesia Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic after nearly 50 years of service to meeting the health care needs of Artesia residents.

Dr. Wall graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1953 and moved to Artesia shortly thereafter. Dr. Wall's private practice spanned from 1955 to 1991, and he became well known for his dedication to patient care, as well as for his maternity practice. In fact, many Artesia residents remind him that "You delivered me, my children, and my mom."

In 1989, the Artesia community-based clinic was founded. The clinic was an outgrowth of legislation that I sponsored to establish six satellite veterans outpatient centers. I believed that veterans should have access to quality health care at a convenient location. Dr. Wall also saw this opening as an opportunity to serve the veterans of southeastern New Mexico. He joined the clinic's staff and brought his care and expertise to the many veterans in the local community. Dr. Wall is a veteran himself, having served in the Marine Corps in World War II, and he understood the need to provide our Nation's veterans with superior health care.

I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Henry Wall for his years of service to Artesia, and to the veteran population, in particular. I have frequently stated that ensuring the health and well-being of the servicemen and women, who have placed their lives in harm's way in order to secure our freedoms, should be a commitment that Americans do not take lightly. I am proud that Dr. Wall has done his part to live up to this commitment. I am sincerely grateful for his service to New Mexico's veterans.●

#### TRIBUTE TO SISTER MARGARET SMITH

● Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, today, I would like to take the opportunity to pay special tribute to an exceptional person, Sister Margaret Smith of Park Rapids, Minnesota. With great pride, Minnesotans have named Sister Margaret Minnesota's Outstanding Older Worker for this year. This is an honor richly deserved, for Sister Margaret has spent 55 of her 80 years serving in a variety of capacities at the St. Joseph's Area Health Services, in Park Rapids.

The award for Minnesota's Outstanding Older Worker is conferred by Green Thumb, Inc., the Minnesota Department of Economic Security, and the Minnesota Department of Labor.

Sister Margaret is virtually an institution, a pillar at St. Joseph's where she has touched the lives of thousands

of people. With her humor, warmth, feeling for people, and dedication, she has been a support not only for appreciative patients and their families, but also for her coworkers at St. Joseph's. Indeed, one of the affectionate nicknames conferred on her by the medical staff is "The Presence." This is a fitting title, indeed: She was among the seven Sisters of Saint Joseph who arrived in Park Rapids in 1946 to establish a hospital, is always where she is needed, and has never missed a single day of work. Moreover, Sister Margaret is nothing if not versatile. Having become a certified radiology technician in 1945, she has worked in almost every department of the hospital, including the lab and surgery; was once St. Joseph's administrator; and now sits on the Board of Directors.

Although she no longer performs procedures, she keeps the radiology department running smoothly by scheduling patients' appointments; maintaining statistics, information, and activities in superb order; working with physicians to arrange radiology procedures; and supervising the department's peer review. In the hospital at large, she keeps her finger well placed on the pulse of the organization by overseeing quality control. Moreover, Sister Margaret is the hospital historian and photo archivist.

At St. Joseph's, Sister Margaret is called "the rock, the foundation." So loved is she for her steadfastness, lightheartedness, and solid values, that patients of 20 years ago return and ask to see her. At its genesis, the success of St. Joseph's and its founders might not have been predicated. Rather, some in the community opposed a Catholic hospital. Today, sister Margaret says she believes her presence as a Sister of St. Joseph has made a difference. Caring for patients, she believes is sacred. Her philosophy has been to care for the whole person, spiritfully as well as physically.

Sister Margaret was to have visited Washington, D.C., during the week of September 11, in order to attend the National Prime Time Awards Program. Although our Nation's crisis made it impossible for this trip to take place, I would like to add my voice to those who have honored Sister Margaret's constancy of heart and spirit in ministering to so many patients for more than 50 years.●

#### IN RECOGNITION OF I. MARTIN MERCADO

● Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of Mr. I. Martin Mercado, who will be presented today with the Small Business Administration's Minority Small Business Person of the Year Award. This prestigious award recognizes the vital role that minority-owned small businesses play in creating jobs and providing robust economic development in their communities. Mr. Mercado is the president of